(c) No, Sir. Open market prices vary from place to place and from time to time. While at certain centres the prices are lower than the PDS prices for non-BPL consumers, at other centres these are more than the same.

(d) Government has already announced a National policy on Storage, Handling and Transportation of foodgrains which envisages private sector participation in storage and handling of foodgrains.

Foodgrains issued through PDS

1286. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of foodgrains issued through the PDS during the last three months; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to reduce the huge stock of foodgrains with the Food Corporation of India in view of the diminishing offtake through PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The quantities of rice and wheat allotted and lifted under Public Distribution System (PDS) during April, 2000 to June, 2000 are as under. The information about lifting for July, 2000 is not yet available.

(Figures in lakh tonnes)

Month	Rice		Wheat	
	Allotment	Lifting (P)	Allotment	Lifting (P)
April, 2000	12.07	5.79	8.75	1.86
May, 2000	12.50	6.24	8 85	2.18
June, 2000	12.50	6.07	8.85	2.75
July, 2000	12.50	----	8,85	----

(P)-Provisional.

(b) The following steps have been taken by Government to reduce the surplus stocks of foodgrains in the Central pool:—

(i) The Government has reduced the Central Issue Prices (C.I.P.) of rice and wheat under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) from 25.7.2000.

(ii) Presently Food Corporation of India (FCI) is releasing wheat under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS) (D) @ Rs, 900/- per quintal through out the country. FCI has also been authorised on 11.7.2000 to undertake open sale of wheat for Punjab region @ Rs. 700/- per quintal *during* July, 2000 and @ Rs. 750/- and Rs. 800/- per quintal during the months of August, 2000 and September, 2000 respectively.

(iii) The Government has offered to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and other countries to give commodity loan of wheat and also to enter into barter trade of wheat with those countries who can give commodities, in exchange.

(iv) Food Corporation of India is also liquidating imported Canadian Red Wheat, rice procured under relaxed specifications (URS) during 1997-98, paddy and 'D' Category (upgradable) rice through Tender Sale.

Rehabilitation of employees of Super Bazar

1287. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to close down the Super Bazar market chain in the country;

(b) if so, what are the circumstances leading to the closure of the common man's market;

(c) what is the estimated number of employees likely to be affected as a result; and

(d) what arrangements, if any, are proposed to be made rehabilitation of the affected employees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.